

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the pending application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a readily biodegradable synthetic middle distillate, the process including:
 - (a) separating the products obtained from synthesis gas via the FT synthesis reaction into one or more heavier fraction and one or more lighter fraction, wherein the one or more heavier fraction of step (a) boils above about 270° C, and wherein the lighter fraction boils in the range C₅ to the boiling point of the heavier fraction, and the lighter fraction is separately hydrotreated prior to step (d);
 - (b) catalytically processing the one or more heavier fraction under conditions which yield mainly middle distillates;
 - (c) separating the middle distillate product of step (b) from the lighter product and heavier product that are also produced in step (b); and
 - (d) blending the middle distillate fraction obtained in step (c) with at least a portion of the one or more lighter fraction of step (a), or products thereof.
2. (Original) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the catalytic processing of step (b) is a hydroprocessing step.
3. (Original) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the catalytic processing of step (b) is a hydrocracking step.
4. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1[[]], including one or more additional step of fractionating ~~at least some of the one or more~~ the lighter fraction of step (a), or products thereof, prior to step (d).
- 5-7. (Canceled)

8. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim [[7]]1, wherein the one or more heavier fraction of step (a) boils above about 300°C.

9. (Canceled)

10. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the ~~one or more~~ lighter fraction boils in the range 160°C to 270°C.

11. (Original) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the product of step (d) boils in the range 100°C to 400°C.

12. (Original) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the product of step (d) boils in the range 160°C to 370°C.

13. (Original) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the product of step (d) is a diesel fuel.

14. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim [[6]]12, wherein the product of step (d) is a diesel fuel.

15. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein the product of step (d) is obtained by mixing the middle distillate fraction obtained in step (c) with at least a portion of the ~~one or more~~ lighter fraction of step (a), or products thereof, in a volume ratio selected to provide a diesel fuel having a required specification.

16. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 15, wherein the product of step (d) is obtained by mixing the middle distillate fraction obtained in step (c) with at least a portion of the ~~one or more~~ lighter fraction of step (a), or products thereof, in a volume ratio of between 1:1 and 9:1.

17. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 16, wherein the product of step (d) is obtained by mixing the middle distillate fraction obtained in step (c) with at least a portion of the ~~one or more~~ lighter fraction of step (a), or products thereof, in a volume ratio of between 2:1 and 6:1.

18. (Currently Amended) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 17, wherein the product of step (d) is obtained by mixing the middle distillate fraction obtained in step (c) with at least a portion of the ~~one or more~~ lighter fraction of step (a), or products thereof, in a volume ratio of 84:16.

19. (New) A process for producing a synthetic middle distillate as claimed in claim 1, wherein at least 60% of the synthetic middle distillate is biodegraded within 28 days as measured by the Carbon Dioxide Evolution method.